

Orca stenorhyncha (the Narrow-nosed Killer).

I described a new *Orca* or Killer from a skeleton received by the British Museum from Weymouth. The skull is figured in the 'Suppl. Cat. Seals and Whales,' pp. 86-88, figs. 7-9.

The authorities at the Zoologiska Riks-Museum at Stockholm have sent to the British Museum three large photographs of an animal which they have determined to be this species, and which was taken at Bohuslän in November 1871, showing that it is coloured like the other Killers, and that it (like *Orca latirostris*) is an inhabitant of the north seas.—J. E. GRAY.

Preliminary Descriptions of new Species of Mollusks from the Northwest coast of America. By W. H. DALL, U. S. Coast Survey.

Voluta (Scaphella) Stearnsii, Dall.—Shell large, slender, spindle-shaped, moderately thick; colour livid purple, more or less obscured by an ashy-white outer layer, more conspicuous near the sutures and on the callosity of the inner lip; exterior smooth (but not polished), except for the strong lines of increase; sutures appressed; siphonal fasciole strong; nucleus small, white, mammillated; aperture more than half as long as the shell, white and livid purple, with a dash of brighter purple at the posterior notch and on the anterior portion of the callus; edge white; callus reflected, thick and strong, with a chink behind the anterior portion; canal twisted to the right, moderately deep; whorls 6-8. Long. 4.13 in., lat. 1.62 in., long. apert. 2.59 in.; defl. 40°. Living, from stomach of cod, Shumagin Islands; dead on beach, Gull rocks, Akutan Pass, and west side of Amaknak Island, Captain's Bay, Unalashka.

Nacella (?) rosea, Dall.—Shell small, egg-ovate, of a deep rose-colour, externally smooth, except for very faint radiating ridges divaricating from the apex, and for lines of growth; margin entire; apex minute, produced before the anterior margin; interior smooth, white, except the margins, which are polished and of the same colour as the exterior; nacre, especially when weathered, silvery. Long. .35 in., lat. .27 in., alt. .12 in., of largest specimen.

Dead on beach, east side of Simeonoff Island, Shumagins; living, probably on Fuci, off shore.

This, from its appearance, is probably a true *Nacella*, congeneric with the Cape-Horn species, and the first described from the northern hemisphere. Its occurrence with that of several other mollusks in the Aleutian fauna is remarkable; and the facts, on further inspection, have developed a considerable resemblance between these antipodal faunæ.

Littorina aleutica, Dall.—Shell depressed; whorls 4, the nucleus including one and a half, last whorl much the largest; spire depressed or nearly flattened; colour variable, from dark brown or purple to waxen white, or banded with white on a darker ground; nucleus polished, dark brown, translucent; sculpture consisting of rather

coarse lines of growth, and about six or eight nodulous revolving ridges, more or less strongly elevated in different specimens, the three middle ones being the most prominent, and faint revolving lines being also traceable occasionally between the ridges; aperture very oblique, smooth, white or purplish within; outer lip sharp; columella broad, straight, generally with a chink behind it; anterior margin a little produced. Long. .41 in., lat. .53 in., of an average specimen. Animal and operculum precisely as in *L. sitkana*, which was abundant on the same rocks.

Hab. Living at Gull rocks, Akutan Pass, Aleutian Islands, abundantly (*W. H. Dall*).

This is a very remarkable and distinct species, resembling no other on the west American coast.

NOTES.—*Buccinum Kennicottii*, Dall, proves, on obtaining specimens containing the soft parts and the operculum, to be a *Chrysodomus*. It was originally described as a *Buccinum*, in deference to the opinion of the late Dr. William Stimpson, who had recently monographed the northern species of that group. Its distribution is from the Shumagins eastward, not, as was originally reported, from Unalashka.

Buccinum Baeri, Midd., proves to be a very marked race of *B. cyaneum*. *B. Fischerianum*, Dall, which was suspected at the time it was described to be similarly related to *B. cyaneum*, proves to be distinct.

Haliotis, which has long been tabulated as an inhabitant of the Aleutian chain, does not exist in that part of the archipelago east of Unalashka, and probably not in these islands at all.—*Proceedings of the California Academy of Sciences*, Oct. 8, 1872.

Projectile Power of the Capsules of Hamamelis virginica.
By MR. T. MEEHAN.

The Author said that while travelling through a wood recently he was struck in the face by some seeds of *Hamamelis virginica*, the common Witch-Hazel, with as much force as if these were spent shot from a gun. Not aware before that these capsules possessed any projecting-power, he gathered a quantity in order to ascertain the cause of the projecting force, and the measure of its power. Laying the capsules on the floor, he found the seeds were thrown generally four or six feet, and in one instance as much as twelve feet away. The cause of this immense projecting-power he found to be simply the contraction of the horny albumen which surrounded the seed. The seeds were oval, and in a smooth bony envelope; and when the albumen had burst and expanded enough to get just beyond the middle (where the seed narrowed again), the contraction of the albumen caused the seed to slip out with force, just as we should squeeze out a smooth tapering stone between the finger and thumb.—*Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Phil.* part iii. p. 235 (1872).